

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. In the above referenced Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 23 under 35 USC § 102 (3) as being anticipated by Higgins (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,480); and claims 4 and 26 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Higgins (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,480) in view of Dirkman (U.S. Patent No. 6,922,399). In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 7, 11, 12, 18, 29, 33, 34 and 40 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Higgins (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,480) in view of Dirkman (U.S. Patent No. 6,922,399) and further in view of Chu et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,683,858). Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability of claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8-10, 13-17, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30-32, and 35-39, and for the allowance of claims 19-22.

Claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-27, 29-30, 32-34, and 36-44 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1, 7, 12, 23, 29 and 34 have been amended. Claims 19-22 have been allowed. Claims 6, 9, 13, 28, 31 and 35 have been cancelled. New claims 41-44 have been added. The rejections above have been traversed and, as such, the applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the allowability of claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-27, 29-30, 32-34, and 36-44.

2. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 6. Applicant thus believes that claim 1 and claims 2-5 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

3. Claim 7 has been amended to claim the subject matter of allowable claim 9. Applicant thus believes that claim 7 and claims 8 and 10-11 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

4. Claim 12 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 13. Applicant thus believes that claim 12 and claims 14-18 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

5. Claim 23 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 28. Applicant thus believes that claim 23 and claims 24-27 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

6. Claim 29 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 31. Applicant thus believes that claim 29 and claims 30, 32-33 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

7. Claim 34 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 35. Applicant thus believes that claim 34 and claims 36-40 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

8. New claim 41 represents allowable claim 10 rewritten in independent form. Applicant thus believes that claim 41 and claims 42-44 that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art.

For the foregoing reasons, the applicant believes that claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-27, 29-30, 32-34, and 36-44 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that they be passed to allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone or facsimile if the Examiner believes that such a communication would advance the prosecution of the present invention.

An additional fee of \$100 is due for additional independent claim 41. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees that are required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1835 (VIXS 007).

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


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March 8, 2006

Date


Sherry Wolf McWhinnie